



# Department of the Navy Northwest Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS *Community Newsletter*



## **The Northwest Range Complex Extension— Post-Scoping Update**

The Department of the Navy (Navy), Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Keyport proposes to extend existing areas for operations in waters associated with the Northwest Range Complex in Washington State. The proposed action would provide adequate space to support existing and future research, test, and evaluation operations for the evolving unmanned and manned vehicle program needs in multiple marine environments.



NAVSEA Keyport personnel were available at each scoping meeting to meet with the public.

NAVSEA Keyport has completed the public scoping period for the Northwest Range Complex Extension Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS). During this scoping process, the Navy heard and received numerous written and verbal comments. The Navy will use this information to develop a comprehensive EIS/OEIS that evaluates and examines these public issues and concerns. This newsletter:

- Summarizes key public scoping comments and issues;
- Answers some of the commonly asked questions from the scoping process; and
- Provides an update on the Northwest Range Complex environmental analysis process.

## **Scoping Background**

Public scoping for the Northwest Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS was the first of several steps in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process. Scoping provided opportunities for public input at the beginning of the analysis process to

shape the proposal, suggest alternatives, and focus the analysis.

As the term scoping indicates, the process helped to define the scope of the EIS/OEIS, such as which topics to study, in how much detail, with focus on key issues and concerns.

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Issue I

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NAVSEA Keyport tests a variety of Navy unmanned undersea vehicles (UUVs) to improve their capabilities, ensure their reliability, and accelerate their deployment in the Fleet. UUVs have already served vital roles for military missions, such as during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Here, U.S. military personnel launch a UUV in the Port of Umm Qasr as part of mine clearance operations to enable ships, carrying humanitarian aid for the Iraqi people, to safely enter the port. UUVs are important tools to both extend the reach of our military and help keep our ships and personnel out of harm's way.



**For more information,  
please visit our website at:**  
[http://www-  
keyport.kpt.nuwc.navy.mil](http://www-keyport.kpt.nuwc.navy.mil)



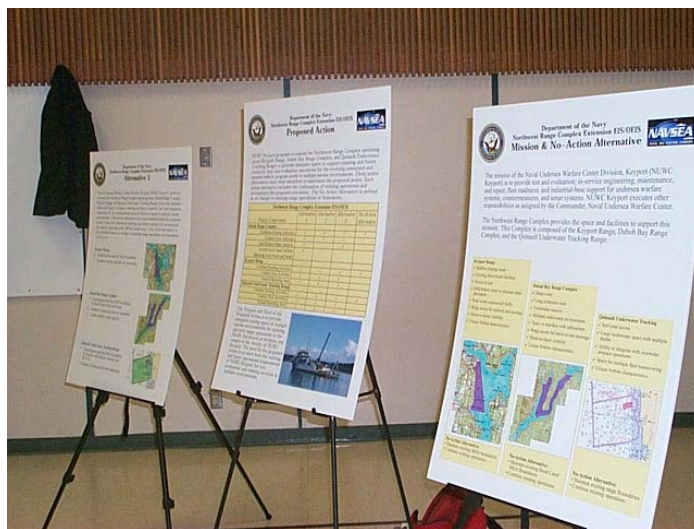
## The Environmental Analysis Process: Scoping

The Northwest Range Complex Range Extension scoping period was initiated with the Notice of Intent published in the *Federal Register*, September 11, 2003 and was extended to January 9, 2004. During this time, interested community members, Native American Indian Nations and Tribes, and agencies were given the opportunity to identify issues, assist in defining the scope of the EIS analysis, and develop or improve alternatives for the proposal.

The Navy held four public scoping meetings between November 17 and 20, 2003 in the towns of Keyport, Belfair, Quilcene, and Hoquiam. The purpose of these meetings was to exchange information with community members, state and local officials, and interested groups and organizations. Members of the public had the opportunity to discuss specific concerns with representatives from NAVSEA Keyport. The community came to these meetings with good ideas and an interest in participating in the NEPA process. Approximately 124 citizens attended these meetings; 49 provided written comments.



Successful retrieval of a target shape with the Cable-controlled Underwater Retrieval Vehicle.



### Using your comments

Public comments have been used from the start of the scoping process. Some of the ways in which they have been used include: extending the scoping period and re-evaluation of the alternatives.

In addition to four scoping meetings, the Navy held briefings for Native American Indian Nations and Tribes, legislative staff, and federal and state regulators during the scoping period. The following Native American Indian Nations and Tribes and state and federal agencies were involved in these briefings: Suquamish Tribe, Skokomish Tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Point No Point Treaty Council, Hoh Tribe, Quinalt Indian Nation, Quileute Tribe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries (Office of Protected Resources and Habitat Conservation Division) and NOAA National Ocean Service (National Marine Sanctuary Program, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary), Washington Department of Natural Resources (Marine Resources), Olympic National Park, Washington Department of Ecology (NW Region), NOAA Fisheries (Marine Mammals), and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Region 6).

In addition to the scoping meetings and comments received at these meetings, 25 letters and 64 e-mails were received by the Navy with comments on the proposed action and alternatives.

## What We Heard—

The scoping meetings brought out many public interests in relation to the proposed action and alternatives. These included safety of marine mammals, use of sonar, and economic impacts to the region as a result of the ability to access fisheries, tourism, and recreational activities. Specifically:

*Keyport (November 17).* The concerns raised at this meeting involved the lack of variation in the alternatives proposed, and opposition to the Navy's proposed activities in this area. Economic concerns due to impacts on fishing, recreational activities, and tourism were also expressed. Concerns about wildlife, safety, and the environment were also articulated.

*Belfair (November 18).* In general, impacts to regional economy due to access to fisheries, tourism, and recreation were discussed. Concern about orcas, other marine mammals, fish, shellfish, geoduck, and the effects of sonar were expressed.



*Quilcene (November 19).* During this well-attended meeting (67 attendees), members of the community expressed their concern about Navy activities in the region and that the ability to access the fisheries could affect the regional economy, especially in the tourism and recreational industries. Safety concerns were also addressed. Concerns centered on use of sonar as well as boats being hit by torpedoes.

*Hoquiam (November 20).* Topics that were raised included concerns over use of sonar, economic impacts and the ability to access fisheries by commercial fishermen, impacts to marine mammals, and request for adequate notification to fishermen in advance of naval activities.

Several agencies and organizations provided comments on the Navy's proposal as well. These agencies included the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, Port Townsend Board of Commissioners, Port Townsend City Council, Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce, Animal Welfare Institute, Acoustic Ecology Institute,

Girl Scouts Totem Council, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, and Grays Harbor Audubon Society. The comments from these entities included a request for clarification of the proposed action; economic concerns; request for further cooperation between the Navy, local agencies, and government; request for

extension of the comment period and increase in the number of public meetings; whether the public comments would have any bearing on the Navy's decision to proceed with the proposed action; request for development of further alternatives for analysis; and re-evaluation of the threshold for sound and sound impacts in general.

## Commonly Asked Questions

*Why do you consider these alternatives?*

NEPA requires the identification and assessment of reasonable alternatives. This provides the decision maker with a distinct choice among alternatives—this includes the No-Action alternative as well.

Reasonable alternatives are identified using the criteria described under the purpose and need for the Northwest Range Complex Extension proposal. All the reasonable alternatives are analyzed for their environmental effect. The decision maker uses this

environmental analysis as well as other factors (e.g., cost, timing, politics) in making the decision.

*Will the Draft EIS/OEIS address the potential impact of sonar on marine mammals?*

Yes, the Draft EIS will analyze impacts of sonar on marine mammals. The analysis will use scientifically approved techniques to describe sonar and analyze the potential effects.

*Continued on page 4.*



## Commonly Asked Questions (continued)

*Where is the EIS/OEIS process now and where is it going?*

The EIS/OEIS is currently being drafted according to the NEPA criteria and in consideration of the public comments received during the scoping process. It is anticipated that the Draft EIS/OEIS will be released for a 45-day comment period in late 2005.

Public hearings will be arranged in Kitsap, Mason, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor counties soon after the Draft EIS/OEIS is released. Public comments will be incorporated into the Final EIS/OEIS, which is anticipated to be published in mid-2006. The record of decision is anticipated in late 2006. EIS/OEIS milestones are outlined at the right; opportunities for future public involvement in this process are indicated in italics and bold.

### COMPLETED ACTIVITIES:

<i>Notice of Intent</i>	<i>Published September 11, 2003</i>
<i>Scoping Meetings</i>	<i>Held November 17-20, 2003</i>
<i>Scoping Period</i>	<i>Concluded January 9, 2004</i>

### FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

Draft EIS/OEIS	Anticipated in late 2005
<b>Public Comment</b>	<b>45-day period from Draft release</b>
<b>Public Hearings</b>	<b>During comment period</b>
Final EIS/OEIS	Anticipated in mid 2006
<b>Public Comment</b>	<b>30-day period</b>
Record of Decision	Anticipated early 2007

## Public Involvement in Shaping the Proposal

The public has helped shape this Northwest Range Complex Extension proposal. The Navy's responsibility is to keep the community informed and involved. The completed public scoping meetings gave the Navy and the community the opportunity to talk about their issues of concern and suggested alternatives.

The Navy will continue to inform the community through the media and other products such as additional

newsletters and our website. Additionally, the Navy will invite public involvement in the form of public hearings during the comment period following publication of the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Please visit our website for up-to-date information at <http://www-keyport.kpt.nuwc.navy.mil>.

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